Copycat by PuffyPhantom

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Summary:

Something interesting happens to Danny, and Vlad finds himself getting involved... not that he's complaining.

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Copycat

Vlad stood in the middle of his mansion's foyer with his hands clasped behind his back, staring down at the teen in front of him. His eyes narrowed in suspicion.

Danny’s unexpected visit wasn’t too out of the ordinary, but the oversized hooded coat he was currently wearing certainly was. As was the serious demeanor he’s been displaying since his arrival some minutes ago. After months of having known him, Vlad had never seen the peppy fourteen-year-old so quiet and nervous.

And though interested in discovering what had Danny behaving so differently, Vlad had decided to hold off any questions in the meantime. Even without explicitly asking, something told him that he would nevertheless be getting some answers very soon.

“So, you said you needed my help with something?” Vlad asked.

Danny fidgeted, hands buried in the deep front pockets of his coat. His eyes remained hidden from view due to the hood covering his head. “Um, yeah…”

After a long pause, Vlad impatiently crossed his arms. “Yes, well, by all means, please take your time to explain. Though I would appreciate at least some specifics before the day ends.”

There was another silent pause. A shorter one this time as Danny mumbled something Vlad couldn’t quite make out. Then, Danny grabbed a fistful of his coat from the front, making it go intangible as he removed it completely off of himself.

Vlad’s eyes widened in surprise. Danny was dressed in his usual white tee and faded jeans combo, but now with a few added accessories. A pair of fuzzy cat ears were situated at the top of his head, and Vlad could see a slim, long tail right behind him. Both ears and tail matched Danny's pitch-black hair in color as well, and—although confused—Vlad was left

impressed by how convincingly real it all looked. “I see Halloween came early this year.”

“This isn’t a costume!” Danny blurted, his pointed ears going back as a cat’s would when showing aggression. “I was fighting some crazy, old cat lady ghost when she hit me with… *something*, and then this happened!”

“I see,” Vlad said, bringing a hand up to his chin in a thinking posture. He pondered for a moment as he took in the information—and the intriguing sight before him. It was no wonder Danny had been acting strange. But at least he seemed back to his usual boisterous self. And then some. Vlad tsked, shaking his head. “This is why I’ve always said that you should leave the ghost hunting to your more than capable parents. You father, specifically,” he finished with a smirk.

Danny crossed his arms. “Yeah, sure. And have all of Amity Park get destroyed in the process?"

“Hm, yes, I suppose that wouldn’t be a very good outcome, would it? In that case, maybe you can simply use your father as bait and—”

“Vlad, you’re getting way too off topic!” Danny snapped.

“My apologies,” Vlad said and looked over at Danny’s tail twitching wildly. “Well then, it certainly appears that you’ve come across quite the conundrum.”

“If by ‘conundrum’ you mean ‘huge and humiliating problem’, then yeah. So, can you help me?”

“Besides offering you a glass of warm milk or a plate of tuna, I’m not sure how I can be of assistance, I’m afraid.”

Danny let out a frustrated and desperate sound. “Seriously? I thought with all those years of you studying the Ghost Zone you would maybe have some kind of idea of what I can do here.”

“Yes, my research into that realm is impressively extensive. But unfortunately for you, I don’t believe I’ve ever encountered the lovely individual who cast this amusing spell on you, therefore I don’t have any knowledge on the matter."

“It’s not amusing.”

“I beg to differ."

Danny groaned and began pacing back and forth. “What am I supposed to do? I can’t be going around like this! If it only stuck to my ghost form then it wouldn’t be so bad, but why did it have to transfer over to my human half, too?”

“A peculiar case, indeed,” Vlad added, paying more attention to Danny’s swishing tail than his outburst. It was oddly fitting, the cat ears and tail. If Vlad had to pick an animal to compare Danny’s personality to, a simple domesticated cat *would* be his choice. He was feisty when he needed to be, yet he remained predominantly gentle. Even his appearance matched. Soft black hair and big blue eyes like that of a kitten’s. And he could be equally as cuddlesome, too, if Vlad was able to catch him in the right mood.

Danny abruptly stopped moving, facing Vlad. “We have to go find her,” he said, his tone as serious as his expression. “She’s crazy, but she didn’t seem all that mean. Maybe if we ask nicely she’ll fix this.”

Vlad blinked. He let out a cynical chuckle. “What a wonderful idea. Really, truly clever. I have but one question, however. What exactly do you mean by ‘we’?”

Danny glared at him. “I mean ‘*we*’ as in *me* and *you*.”

"Hmm, as delightful as it sounds to go hunt down a mysterious spirit in the endless space that is the Ghost Zone, I must politely decline,” Vlad said sarcastically as he calmly walked past Danny and picked up the forgotten coat.

Danny grabbed Vlad by the lapel of his suit as he straightened back up. “Hey, you owe me one for making me wear that stupid cheerleading uniform that one time.”

“I do believe that debt has been fully paid off.”

Danny's glare didn't falter, but he remained quiet.

“What is it? Cat got your tongue?” Vlad asked with a wry smile. “Honestly, my dear boy, don’t tell me you don’t remember how brazenly provocative you were that night. Shall I refresh your memory?”

Face flushed and scowling, Danny angrily let go of Vlad’s suit. “Forget it. I knew coming here was a bad idea,” he muttered as he snatched the coat from Vlad and started stomping his way towards the main double doors.

Vlad swiftly summoned a Plasmius clone, having him land in front of Danny to stop him before he could take the next step.

“Now, now, let’s not be so hasty to leave when you only just got here,” Plasmius told him, showing off his fangs in a grin. Even if putting up with Danny's plight wasn't on Vlad's agenda, he couldn't deny that he was more than entertained by the situation. And it had been a while since he last got to have his fun with his favorite little half-ghost.

Danny glowered at Plasmius, appearing just about ready to lash out. But the way one his ears twitched made him look even more childish and cute rather than anything intimidating.

“How about this…” Vlad made the clone disappear, grabbing Danny’s attention back as he walked up to him. “Why don’t you simply wait it out and see what happens? Maybe all it takes is some time for this to wear off.”

“Seems too good to be true.”

“But it doesn’t hurt to try.”

Danny’s shoulders slumped along with his drooping tail. He let out a hopeless sounding breath. “I guess not.”

“I’ll even be generous enough to let you stay here in the meantime,” Vlad said as he took one of the tips of Danny’s ears between his thumb and forefinger and curiously rubbed it. He wondered if they were as sensitive as the real thing.

Danny turned his head away from Vlad’s touch. “Gee, thanks. But why do I feel like your offer isn’t exactly coming out of the kindness of your heart?”

“Or if you prefer, I can take you to the nearest shelter—”

“Here is fine,” Danny said curtly.

“Good. Well, seeing as we don’t know how long this will take, I hope your family isn’t expecting you back home anytime soon.”

“They’re not. I lied to them and asked if I could stay over at Tucker’s for the weekend so they wouldn’t see me like this, and so that I’d have as much time as I could get to figure something out.”

“I see. Very well then. That gives us two full nights to test my theory.”

“Yeah. Great.” Danny’s limp posture didn’t change, clearly still dejected and doubtful of the idea.

Despite being one who didn’t have much difficulty casting emotions aside, it was moments like these where Vlad couldn’t help but feel for the teen. And he still wasn't quite sure what to make of that. Maybe it was his old age that was causing him to become so sentimental, or maybe it was something else…

Vlad sighed, loosening up his stiff shoulders. “And if things don’t improve by Sunday morning, then I suppose I can help you find this ‘crazy, old cat lady’ ghost.”

“Really?” Danny asked, his cat ears and tail perking right up.

Vlad’s lips twitched as he fought back a smile. “Yes. Really.”

“Wow. Um, Thanks. But… if you’re kind of planning on helping me anyway, then why can’t we just go now?”

“I’d rather avoid the possibility of being turned into a feline if I can.”

“Oh. I guess that’s fair.” Danny shifted in place, looking away and remaining quiet for a moment. “Um… so, were you serious about the tuna?”